

# AVON LOCAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATION

## NORTH SOMERSET AREA GROUP

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### MINUTES of the meeting of the North Somerset Area Group of ALCA

held on Thursday, 21 September 2017 at 10:00am  
Strawberry Line Café, Yatton Railway Station, BS49 4AJ

**Present:** Geoff Coombs (Chairman) Barrow Gurney PC  
Dick Whittington Butcombe PC  
Jeremy Blatchford Nailsea TC  
Joanna van Tonder (Secretary) Barrow Gurney & Brockley PCs

GC welcomed JvT on to the committee as Secretary.

1. **Apologies for absence** – none received
2. **Recruitment of additional member to Area Group Committee** – contact had been made with the Portishead councillor who had shown an interest in joining the committee at the NSAG AGM. She was unable to attend this meeting but intended to discuss the role with GC at the upcoming ALCA AGM. GC
3. **Matters arising from the ALCA North Somerset AGM:**
  - a) **Larger Councils forum** – it was agreed to support the concept of a Larger Councils Forum. DW to convey this to Bob Symons, Chair of ALCA. JB volunteered to put himself forward as NALC were looking for national representatives. DW  
JB
  - b) **Broadband provision** – the contract to provide superfast broadband in the next phase of the roll-out had been awarded to Gigaclear, however, the areas within North Somerset to be upgraded had not yet been announced. Parish Council briefing sessions had not been arranged either. GC to contact Simon Gregory, NSC with a view to circulating a note to member councils. GC
  - c) **Clerks' support network** – JvT to arrange a coffee morning for new clerks within the district with a view to rolling out regular get-togethers for all interested clerks. JvT
  - d) **ALCA led workshops on hot topics (eg. Cybercrime, safeguarding, health & well-being, General Data Protection Regulations)** – it was agreed to pass this list of subjects on to Bob Symons. DW
4. **Town and Parish Forums**
  - a) **Date of next GENERAL T&P Forum: 1 November 2017** – morning session in Weston-super-Mare; general forum to cover *cyber security, NSC website developments and broadband*. It was agreed the Town Hall as a venue was not ideal as many were experiencing difficulties hearing speakers due to shortcomings of the audio system. JvT to address this with Rhiannon Jones, NSC as well as to request that all General T&P Forums are held in the evenings at Castlewood. JvT
  - b) **Future topics** – the Spring general forum would be covering Health & Well-being and would include speakers from a range of partners. It was suggested the forum could take the form of a workshop with more interaction between participants. It was agreed to plan this forum more intensively at the next meeting.

c) **Other** – no other T&P Forum matters.

**5. Other NSC issues:**

a) **Parish Liaison Officers** – NSC's proposed review of the effectiveness and future of the PLO scheme was discussed and it was strongly felt that ALCA NS should be involved in this. JvT to make contact with the Department Head overseeing the review. JB to contact Cllr Jan Barber.

**JvT  
JB**

b) **Devolution of services** – JB detailed how the process of devolution of certain services was taking place effectively in Nailsea. It was felt it would be good to circulate a positive story.

c) **Collaborative clusters of Town / Parish Councils** – various models of collaborative clustering could be put to use to allow smaller PCs to take on some of the devolved services on offer. JvT to arrange a meeting with David Carter, NSC for GC, DW and JvT to discuss devolution and collaboration possibilities for smaller councils.

**JvT**

d) **Other**

- Parking enforcement was considered an area ALCA NS could assist PCs with (see 8. Any Other Business, below).
- The rolling out of a gully prioritisation system for drain maintenance seems to have been implemented by NSC but it was questioned whether PCs felt they had had sufficient input.
- It was felt information around the availability of grants to PCs could be more effectively circulated. JB suggested contact be made with Gail Hubbard, NSC. JvT to discuss with Rhiannon Jones, NSC.

**JvT**

**6. Other Town and Parish issues:**

a) **Role in the provision of Health & Social Care** – addressed under 4b) Town & Parish Forums: Future Topics, above.

b) **Other** – DW raised a question around PC websites and compliance with legislation; to take up with Deborah White.

**7. ALCA (County) AGM – 7 October 2017** – DW to raise issues of Larger Council Forums and "hot topic" workshops with Bob Symons in advance of the AGM.

**DW**

**8. Any other business**

- A letter sent out to a number of PCs from Pill & Easton-in-Gordano PC asking for support for their petitioning of NSC over parking enforcement was discussed. JvT to forward letter on to GC.
- Reaching out to non-member PCs to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

**JvT**

**9. Dates for future meetings** – 10:00 on 16 November 2017 (Venue TBC)